

# OSU WATERMAN STUDENT FARM

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Major: FARE Ecological Engineering & German  
STEP Project Category: Internship  
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## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

For two months, I volunteered for approximately 300 hours as an undergraduate intern on the OSU Waterman Student Farm just north of campus. I was given free range to research and determine a keystone project. I focused on mapping the farm and planning for future projects involving agroforestry, native flower prairie establishment and pollinator habitat. I transplanted over 60 common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) seedlings out of the fields and into a permanent home near the honeybee hives.



## MOTIVATION

With six years of experience working on organic vegetable farms, I knew I could be a contributing member of the student farm team. The STEP grant paid for the housing, food and equipment I needed during my time volunteering on the farm.

## WHAT I LEARNED

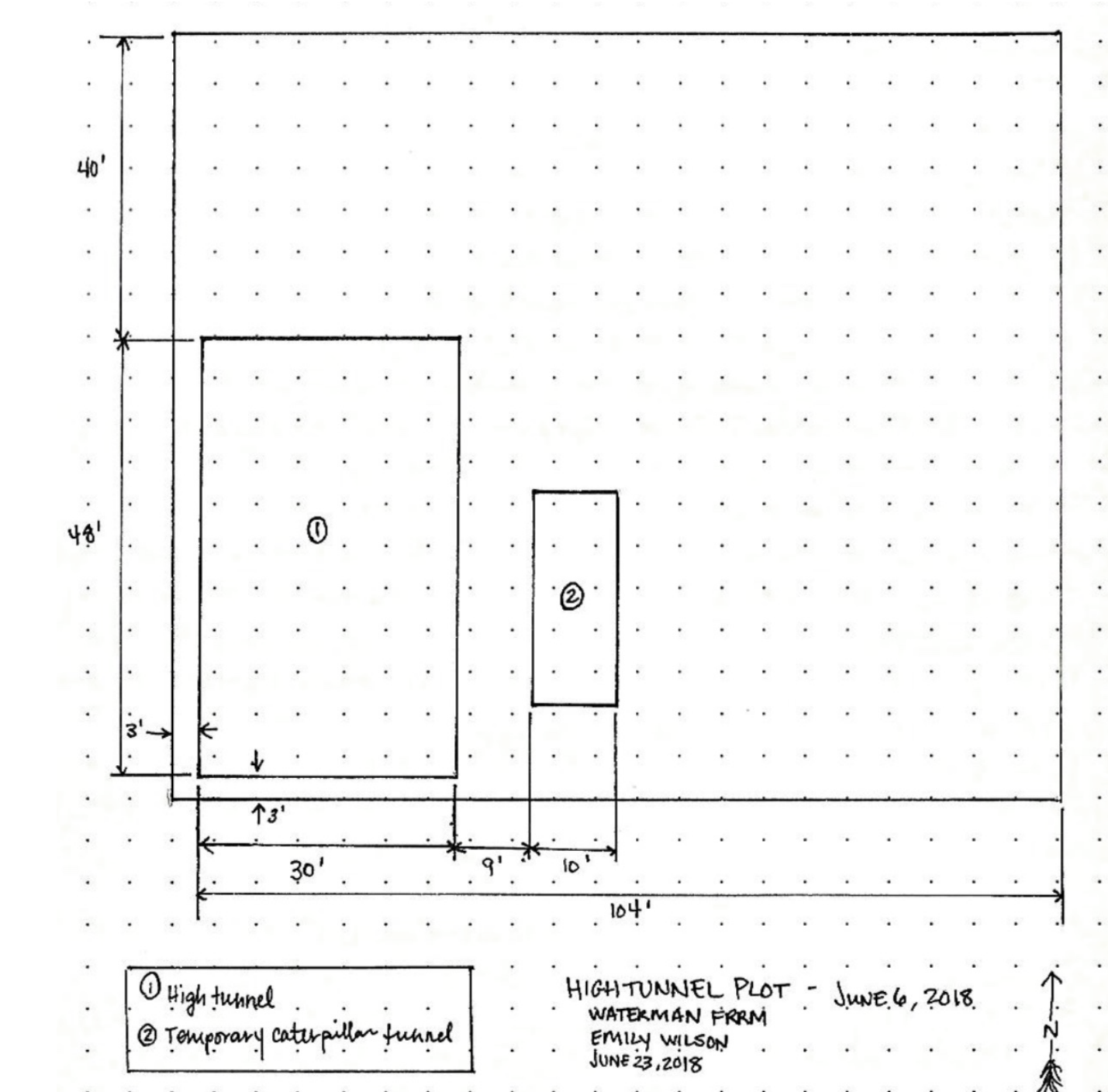
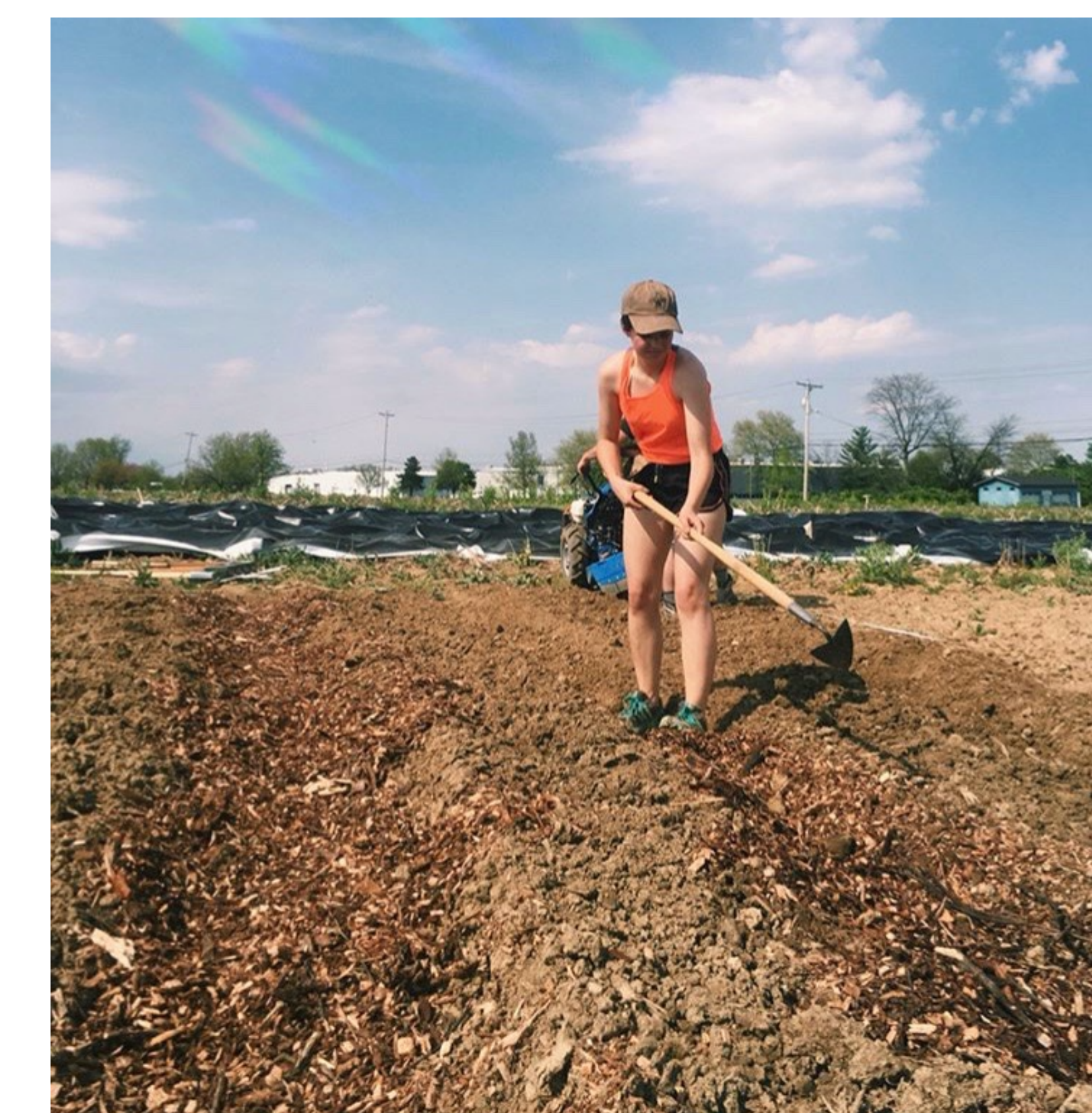
I spent hours researching native Ohio pollinators and flowering plants. With the help of EEOB graduate student Ryan McCarthy I made inflorescence charts for the plants on the farm site, planning for full-season honeybee nutrition with prairie and agroforestry grants. I learned through events set up by my colleagues on the farm about sustainable farming techniques in Belize and helped to plant and maintain a unique milpa field.



## TRANSFORMING EXPERIENCE

I discovered through this internship a love of research. Having been allowed the time to research and explore a new topic piqued my interest. With the guidance of my STEP advisor and boss, I was able to find a project that not only deeply interested me, but has also ignited a desire to observe and ask questions about my natural environment. My advisor told me my work was graduate student quality – since then I have picked up an undergraduate research position and have been looking at grad schools, inspired to keep going in research.

I made life-long friends on the student farm team. My student colleagues empowered and encouraged one another. Their friendship and companionship will be with me for many years.



## FAVORITE PART

My colleagues put on a multi-day event in which members of the farm team and community (including a student farm team from another university) came together to learn about the traditional and sustainable farming methods of the indigenous Mayans in Belize, called milpa. Once such farmer, the head of his community, was there to show us how to do the planting, which we did together. We also were taught about indigenous American sustainable farming using a similar methodology, called the Three Sisters. It was an enriching experience.



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